

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6441
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L KHARTOUM 0427

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINS, PINT, SU
SUBJECT: RUMORS OF CABINET CHANGES AFTER ELECTIONS

REF: 77 KHARTOUM 3218

ELECTIONS TO NATIONAL PEOPLES ASSEMBLY AND REGIONAL PEOPLES
ASSEMBLY IN JUBA BEGIN FEBRUARY 2 AND WILL LAST UNTIL FEBRUARY 12.
NEWLY ELECTED ASSEMBLY WILL PROBABLY MEET IN EARLY MARCH.
ALTHOUGH CABINET MEMBERS ARE NOT NECESSARILY ELECTED MEMBERS OF
ASSEMBLIES, NIMEIRI IS SAID TO BE PLANNING TO TAKE OPPORTUNITY
OF ELECTIONS TO SHUFFLE CABINET AGAIN IN LATE FEBRUARY OR EARLY
MARCH. RUMORS OF IMPENDING CABINET CHANGES ARE ALWAYS AVAILABLE
IN KHARTOUM BUT PRESENT INCREASE IN RUMORS MAY BE JUSTIFIED.

2. ONE CABINET MEMBER SAID TO BE ON WAY OUT IS BONA MALWAL RING,
MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND CULTURE, ONLY FULL MINISTER
WHO IS SOUTHERNER AND ONLY CABINET MEMBER WITH INDEPENDENT
CONSTITUENCY. HE HAS CAREFULLY MAINTAINED HIS POLITICAL
SUPPORT BACK IN HIS HOME AREA NEAR WAU. BONA DOES NOT
WANT TO REMAIN IN CABINET BECAUSE OF PERSONAL DISILLUSIONMENT.
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NIMEIRI RESPECTS HIM BUT, AS REPORTED REFTEL, SINCE 1977
CABINET SHAKE-UP HE HAS BEEN UNCOMFORTABLY OUTSPOKEN AND
INDEPENDENT. NORTHERN OFFICIALS DISLIKE BONA FOR HIS FRANK
OPPOSITION TO RECONCILIATION AND FOR HIS MINISTRY'S CULTURAL
MAGAZINE WHICH, AMONG OTHER SINS, HAS BEEN CAMPAIGNING
PERSUASIVELY AGAINST NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO ESTABLISH KORANIC
LAW IN SUDAN.

3. BONA MALWAL RING'S REPLACEMENT AS MINISTER CULTURE AND INFORMATION, IF HE IS DROPPED, MAY BE STATE MINISTER DR. ISMAIL AL-HAJ MUSA OR PRESENT MINISTER OF YOUTH AND SPORTS RETIRED ARMY MAJOR ZEIN AL-ABDIN MOHAMED AHMED ABDEL GADIR. TOKEN SOUTHERNER ROLE IN NIMEIRI GOVERNMENT COULD BE ASSUMED BY FRANCIS DENG, STATE MINISTER OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, A DINKA FROM SOUTHERN KORDOFAN. DENG, HOWEVER, HAS BEEN ATTACKED IN POSTERS PUT UP AT UNIVERSITY KHARTOUM FOR REMAINING AS MEMBER OF NATIONAL COMMITTEE TO INTRODUCE KORANIC LAW TO SUDAN. OTHER TWO SOUTHERN MEMBERS HAVE IGNORED COMMITTEE. DISSIDENT PROPAGANDA POSTERS ARE TRADITIONAL WAY FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS TO EXPRESS ILLEGAL VIEWS. POSTERS ARE USUALLY REMOVED PROMPTLY ALTHOUGH AUTHORITIES ARE TOLERANT OF STUDENTS MAKING THEM.

4. ANOTHER CABINET MEMBER SLATED FOR REPLACEMENT IS SAID TO BE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORM KARAMELLA EL AWAD. SOME RUMORS MAY BE STARTED JUST TO MAKE PREDICTIONS COME TRUE. NIMEIRI HAS BEEN PERSONALLY HOLDING PORTFOLIOS OF PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FINANCE SINCE SHAKE-UP LAST SEPTEMBER AND WILL PROBABLY ACT SOON TO REGULARIZE COMPOSITION OF CABINET.

5. RELATED RUMOR FROM CREDIBLE SOURCE IS THAT NIMEIRI WILL APPOINT HASSAN AL-TURABI, MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD LEADER, AND
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SADIQ AL-MAHDI, MAHDIST LEADER, AS PRESIDENTIAL COUNSELORS AFTER NEW PEOPLES ASSEMBLY CONVENES, PROBABLY EARLY MARCH. FINDING SUITABLE SLOTS FOR THESE TWO PROMINENT LEADERS OF POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS MAY FREE NIMEIRI TO FILL CABINET POSITIONS WITHOUT ANTAGONIZING MOSLEM BROTHERHOOD OR ANSARS BY OMISSION OF THEIR REPRESENTATIVES.
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